

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 765

By Turner M

## A RESOLUTION urging Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

WHEREAS, in 1935, the United States established, by law, that workers must be free to form unions; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to form or join a union is internationally recognized by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS, the free choice to join with others and bargain for better wages and benefits is essential to economic opportunity and good living standards; and

WHEREAS, unions benefit communities by strengthening living standards, stabilizing tax bases, promoting equal treatment, and enhancing civic participation; and

WHEREAS, states in which more people are union members are states with higher wages, better benefits, and better schools; and

WHEREAS, union workers receive better wages and benefits: union workers earn 29 percent more than workers without a union, 35 percent of union workers have greater access to health insurance, and union workers are four (4) times more likely to have access to a guaranteed defined-benefit pension; and

WHEREAS, unions help raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap for minorities and women by increasing median weekly earnings by 31 percent for union women workers, 31 percent for African-American workers, 50 percent for Latino workers, and 9 percent for Asian-American workers; and

WHEREAS, workers across the nation are routinely denied the freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life, with 25 percent of private-sector employers illegally firing at least one worker for union activity during organizing campaigns; and

WHEREAS, 77 percent of the public believes it is important to have strong laws protecting the freedom for workers to make their own decisions about having a union, and 58 percent of workers would join a union if they had the chance; and

WHEREAS, employers often refuse to bargain fairly with workers after forming a union by dragging out first contract bargaining for up to two (2) years in 45 percent of successful campaigns; and

WHEREAS, each year millions of dollars are spent to frustrate workers' efforts to form unions, and most violations of workers' freedom to choose a union occur behind closed doors, with 78 percent of employers forcing employees to attend mandatory anti-union meetings; and

WHEREAS, when the right of workers to form a union is violated, wages fall, race and gender pay gaps widen, workplace discrimination increases, and job safety standards disappear; and

WHEREAS, a worker's fundamental right to choose a union free from coercion and intimidation is a public issue that requires public policy solutions, including legislative remedies; and

WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act has been introduced in the U.S. Congress in order to restore workers' freedom to join a union; and

WHEREAS, the Employee Free Choice Act will safeguard workers' ability to make their own decisions with these abuses, provide for first contract mediation and arbitration, and establish meaningful penalties when employers violate workers' rights; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we support the Employee Free Choice Act, which would authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union as the bargaining representative when a majority of employees voluntarily sign authorizations designating that union to represent them; provide for first contract mediation and arbitration; and establish meaningful penalties for violations of a worker's freedom to choose a union.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act to protect and preserve for America's workers their freedom to choose for themselves whether or not to form a union.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation.